

INSTRUCTION

ALL the People, Judges, and

Magistrates, to whom the Law is committed, teaching what just Government is, and how far the Magistrates powers extend, and what the Sword of Justice is to cut down, and what they defend.

Whereby they may learn, and be directed to discern betwixt the guiltless and the guilty; and betwixt a matter of wilfull wrong, and evil doers, which they are to punish, and a matter of conscience, by men that fear God, which they are to be a private party, and not a terror; and to distinguish divers causes are discovered; which are proved to be matters of conscience, and not of wilfull wrong; though many therefore are unjustly persecuted and afflicted for evil doers.

With an exposition of some parts of the Law; for the collection of such, as desires to judge righteously between man and man, who would discern of different causes; and justify the Righteous, and condemn the evil doers.

By a friend to righteousness, and a lover of just judgement, who desires the increase of good Government.

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A
MESSAGE
FOR
INSTRUCTION, &c.

Concerning government and Magistracy this I have to say;



It is an ordinance of God, ordained of him for the preserving of peace among men, for the punishing and suppressing of evill doers, and for the praise and safety of them that doe well; that mens persons and estates may be preserved from the violence and wrong dealing of evill men; And for this end government was ordained of God, to be set up in the earth by the Institution of the Lord; that righteousness should goe free, and the wicked be bound and limited. Now such as handle the Law, and are executors thereof, who are ordained of God to iudge and govern the people; ought to be iust men; fearing God, and walking in his Law, and hating and denying every false way, that people may receive examples of righteousness, and holy and lawfull walking from their Conversations; and they that are set to govern the people ought to have the spirit of true and sound judgement to try into the root of all causes, whereby they may be able to discern of different causes, and to give iust judgement in all things; and such will iudge by equall measure for God, and not for man, but without respect of persons; and such will be a terror to transgressors, and will strengthen and encourage them that doe well; and then the execution of the Law will answer the end wherefore it was added; for because of transgression was the law added to slay transgression;

A 2. was written and

and to bind under the transgressor, and to make him stand in awe and be afraid; for the just law, reacheth to the just witness of God; and answereth it in every man, and he that walkes in the law of God, and hath his heart therein exercised, the law of man hath no power over him, to condemne him, but it justifies him, and defends him, and preserves him from all wrong; but who doth not walk in the law of God, but is exercised in evill, and transgresseth the light and pure law of God in his conscience by doing evill & by wrong & unjust dealing; then the law of man takes hold upon him, and binds him, & judges him, & Condemns him, for the evil done by him, contrary to the light in his own conscience, which answereth to the just execution of the law in condemning of him: And this is the work of the law in the hand of faithfull executors, who justly executeth the just law, in defending and preserving the iust and innocent men from wrong doing, and in condemning and iudging the ungodly and evill men, for wrong doing; whereby the witness of God in them both may answer to the Iust government in defending the one, and in condemning the other; and this is a good favor to God where the iust lawes are iustly executed, by iust men, But where unrighteous men are in power, and the execution of the law in their hands, that are themselves transgressors, such will not iudge for God, but the good lawes will be subverted unto wrong ends, from their proper vertue; and the hands of the wicked will be strengthened, and the evill doers will escape unpunished; and the Innocent will suffer, and Iustice and true Iudgment will be turned backward, for when the wicked beares rule, the people cannot rejoyce, nor Iustice and true Iudgment cannot be received from men; who are themselves unjust and unrighteous; for though the lawes may be good and iust; yet the executors thereof being evill, and themselves transgressors, worthy of condemnation by the law; the transgression of the law in others cannot iustly be iudged by such, who are themselves guilty of Iudgment, and therefore the lawes will be subverted, and iustice and true iudgment neglected; because such as handle the law knowes not God, but are in the transgression

gression of the righteous law, and of the iudgment thereof are themselves guilty: Soe therefore they that handle the law should be men iustified according to the law, and free from the transgression; that they may the more iustly punish, reprove and condemn it in others; and may minister Iustice and true Iudgment through the law to all people under them; and no man ought to be respected in Iudgment, but every mans cause ought to be heard, the poor as well as the rich; and their matters diligently sought into, and all ought to receive iust iudgment from iust men by the iust law; for the law is a defence about all the righteous, to defend and preserve them; in peace and freedome, from all their enemies, who are to be limited by the law, as I have said: And they that are reconciled to God, whose consciences are exercisied towards God in all things, they are not under the law, nor the law hath no power over them, for the law is fulfilled in them, by Christ who teacheth them in all things to walk without offence towards God and all men, in truth and in righteousness, to God and all men; and such the law of man is to defend and not to Iudge them; to iustifie them, and not to condemn them; and to be a praise to them, and not a terror; and such setteth to seal that the law is iust and good, the holy; who walketh in iustness, in goodness and holiness; and doth not transgress the good lawes of any nation, but walk void of offence towards all, for they walk not in the flesh, but in the spirit, and are doers of the law, and not breakers of it, and so comes not under the guilt of condemnation, in any thing, but are iustified in all things; for the light of Christ leadeth them into all truth; and so out of all condemnation; their wayes are righteous and pure, and their workes are iust and equall towards God and all man; and they seek not the wrong of any mans person or estate, but seekes the good of all, forgiving their enemies, and praying for them, and seekes not vengeance upon their adversaries, but they bear all things patiently, and such are the servants of God, and not transgressors of his law, nor the iust lawes of man; And if such doe suffer by a law, that law is uniuist, and so is that Magistrate

that executes that law; and that suffering is not for
 evil doing, but for a good conscience sake, and the
 Innocent can rejoyce in such suffering, but the executio-
 ners thereof shall howle and weep; So that in all ages there
 was such suffering, which was not for evil doing, but for
 the exercise of a pure conscience; and such sufferings there
 are at this day; and this is because the unrighteous and the
 unjust beates rule which subverts the law, and turnes true
 Iudgment backward, and oppresseth the seed of God, and
 rules over it in Tyranny; and this is where darkness rules in
 the heart, and Ignorance in the mind; and true Iudgment is
 wanting, for light is called darkness, and darkness light; and
 good is put for evil, and evil for good; and truth is called
 heresy, and error is called truth; and because of this the
 righteous are Iudged unjustly, and falsly condemned; and
 the guilty are set free, and thus is Iudgment turned quite
 backward; where the seed of enmity ruleth above the face
 of God; and such a government is not blessed, but made a
 curse unto that dominion; where it is feared, and this is be-
 cause such are set to rule and govern, who are not ruled and
 governed by the Lord, but are in the transgression of the Iust
 and righteous law, and are unjust men, and not reconciled
 unto God; upon whose shoulders the government lyes, and
 the execution of the law in their power; who cannot mi-
 nister true Iudgment, nor discern of different causes among
 men.

And therefore all magistrates are to weigh and be confide-
 rate in all these things, and so to act and Iudge among men,
 as they may give a good account unto God and all men;
 and when a cause is brought before them to give Iudgment
 of, or any accused unto them; that they should execute the
 law upon; they should by the spirit of the Lord first try into
 the ground and nature of such matters, to know whether it
 be a wilful and purposed wrong or injury done between man
 and man, or it be of ignorance or want of better knowledge,
 or such like: or whether it be a matter of conscience, or about
 religion, or the worship of God whereupon the controversy
 dependeth,

dependeth; and if it be a matter of wilfull and purposed wrong, or of ignorance, then good reason and justice will teach a Magistrate to defend the Innocent from wrong, or to restore his wrong by true iudgement, that his person and estate be freed from all wrong, and preserved, and that the wrong dealer be restrained and punished and iudged iustly according to his offence: but if it be a matter of conscience about religion or the worship of God, then the magistrates with their law ought not to meddle therein; or to iudge of such matters; for these things concerning the things that are spiritual are out of their Iurisdiction, and not in their power to iudge of; and if the controversy between man and man depend about such causes, not having reflection upon persons or estates, but onely about spiritual matters, then magistrates with their lawes ought not to iudge in these causes; but spiritual men ought onely to give their iudgements hereof, as they have received from God; and though men be in controversy about religion and the worship of God, yet if they be men of peace not wronging one another in their persons or estates, they ought to be both protected in a good government by the iust and righteous laws, and here the sword of Iustice is laid onely upon the evill doer, to be a terror and a punishment to him, and to limite and restrain him from wrong dealing, and this is the end wherefore it was ordained of God to be among men, and not to be laid upon the conscience to oppress and afflict the tender consciences of the upright; whose minds are exercised in the law of God, for such should have praise that doe well by the sword of Iustice while it is a terror to all evill doers whatsoever, and this is the perfect end wherefore the law was added, and the practise of it herein by faithfull and iust executors, is well pleasing and acceptable to the Lord.

And now as concerning this one thing, which is oppression in the Nation, brought forth through the unjust and false execution of the lawes, whereby many tender consciences are afflicted; and not for any wrong or evill doing, but for the exercise of a pure conscience; Whereat many for conscience

science sake doth deny and cannot pay any thing, to maintain a steeple-house or place of worship, which the people of the world doe worship in, and where they commit Idolatry, neither can they for conscience sake pay any thing to uphold such worship, and such a ministry and ministers, which are not of Christ, nor ever were sent of him; but of Antichrist and such by which the people are led in blindness and error, as manifestly doth appear through the whole land. And yet the magistrates some of them being blind and Ignorant as the people, doth compell many people by their Writs and orders and Iudgments to maintain a Priest and steeple-house, which for conscience sake they deny to maintain, and yet by authority from the magistrates, are the Innocent mens goods spoyled by distress, and great oppression exercisied upon many poor people, to maintain and uphold the ministry and worship of this generation, which is not of God, but against him, and many hereupon are cast into prison, and others have their goods taken from them by violence, and great havock is made in the countries about this matter, Now first it may be considered that to deny, uphold, and maintain a steeple-house and place where Ignorant people in tradition do meet to worship; is not a matter of willtull or purposed wrong dealing, or the breach of any bargain or contract between man & man, but it is a matter of conscience to the people of God; & for a good consciencie sake, they cannot do such a thing as to maintain a place of worship, which abomination is committed in by Ignorant & rude people, who are without the fear of God, as daily is manifest, & it is not manifest that by denying of this they Iniure any mans person or estate, in any thing which belongs unto him by lawfull bargain & contract or otherwise, neither is there any reason or equity in this matter that any should be forced & compelled by Iniustice & oppression to uphold a house of worship which others worship in, and not they, and they knowing that worship to be abomination to the Lord also, and not the true worship of the true God, and their is no Iustice nor religion in it, that any should be cauled by force to uphold a house, for other people to com-

commit and practise idolatry in, if the house were for any good purpose or honest practise, as for poore or impotent people to dwell in, or such like, who had not houses of their own, because of their poverty, then that were a deed of charity to uphold it, and the people of God would not deny it, but could freely give their money to such an use and end; but because it is not to such an use, but onely a place to commit Idolatry in, and to worship God ignorantly in superstitions; therefore it is a matter of conscience unto many; and for a good conscience sake, they rather suffer the spoyleing of their goods, and afflictions upon their bodies; then to pay their money for such an use and end, and herein the Magistrates doth great injustice in the sight of God and his Saints, and contrary to reason and a good conscience; in causing Innocent mens goods to be spoyleed by cruelty to uphold a place of Idolatrous worship, contrary to mens tender consciences, for as I have said they do no wrong to any man, but only peoples wills are offended; and their blind zeal turned into rage and fury against the iust, who worships God in spirit and in the truth, and cannot uphold the houses of false worship; and it is a shame unto the people and ministers themselves; who cannot uphold their own worshiping houses, and it is a reproach upon their God and their Religion who causes others to maintain their worshiping houses; by iniustice and great oppression, and will not themselves maintain the houses where they worship their God, but people who fear God, are greatly oppressed divers wayes to uphold worshiping places for others to worship in, as in many parts of this nation is wofull testimony, which is a shame to the Magistrates by whose authority these things are done; and a great reproach to the very name of Christianity that people against a pure conscience, and contrary to good reason, should be compelled to uphold and maintain a worship and ministry which they doe not partake off, but their very enemies that persecute them; whose consciences are defiled and not exercised; and

their worship and ministry, which stands not in the exercise of a pure conscience, but in vain traditions and superstitious Idolatry; are the people of God forced to maintain with maintenance, by oppression contrary to their consciences; and the unjultness of these things cries for vengeance from heaven upon the ungodly rulers and people; who causeth the iust and upright to groan by oppression; and thus the law is subverted, contrary to that end wherefore it was added; and the government is abused contrary to that purpose wherefore it was ordained of God; for the guiltless are condemned and judged, and the guilty are set free; the exercise of pure consciences are oppressed, and the false abominations and Idoll worships are strengthened and defended; and because of these things is the wrath of God kindled, and shall not be quenched, till it have consumed the wicked from off the face of the earth, that the just God may be feared, and his people enjoy their freedome and liberty in the practise of the pure religion, and the exercise of their pure consciences; and this will the Lord bring forth in his appointed time according to his promise; that his people may reioyce in him over all their oppressors, and cruell taskmasters which doth uniuistly oppress the seed of God.

And as concerning the maintaining of Ministers, it is the same in nature, and as uniuist and unequall as upholding of worshipping houses; for though many out of a good conscience do deny to maintain a professed Minister by paying to him so much or such a summe, yet they do not hereby wrong him wilfully, contrary to right, in breaking any contract or Covenant, formerly made with him by themselves or predecessors: nor they do not withhold from him any thing which properly belongs to him as debt, or due for his labour; by any Covenant binding thereunto; onely the most that can be said is, that such a summe, or gift was formerly given, out of that estate to a man belonging to such a Parish; and therefore now it is claimed as due, by custome of many generations practise, and so ought to be

be done; as the maintenance to that man because of his labour in his Ministry; now to this I answer, what though it was formerly done, such a summe paid, and such a gift freely given by our Ancestors in the times of Ignorance and darkness; that practise of theirs then doth not bind any now to do the same, seeing no record can appear that they bound themselves and their heirs for ever so to do; and now hath the clear light of the gospell sprung forth, and the light of the day hath discovered all the workes of Ignorance; and though the man that claimes such a gift or hire as debt to him because of his labour, let them pay him, for whom he doth labour; and who doth partake of his Ministry and labour, and let others be free, who for conscience sake, cannot do it; who knows his labour not deserving of wages, but to be deceit and abomination, and deceiving of soules; and sees himself to be a proud, covetous man, and an Idle person; who maintaines himself by the fruit of other mens labours, in the vanity of life and without the fear of the Lord, and this makes the thing a matter of conscience to many, that for no better use nor to no other end, they should pay their money, (which cannot be justly claimed as a just debt, but as a gift at most) to the upholding of such men and such practises, which are not according but contrary to God, in labour, life, and practise, and to uphold and maintain a man as a Minister of Christ which is not so, but the contrary as by his fruits is made manifest, and that in ministry & worship, which is not the worship and ministry of the true God, but the contrary as doth appear, this many of the people of God cannot do for a good conscience sake, except they should transgress the light of Christ and the law of God, in their own hearts and consciences, and so bring themselves into condemnation by the Lord; so let all men take notice hereof, that though the people of God do deny to pay any thing to uphold and maintain such a worship and such ministers, which are not the ministers of Christ, nor the worship of the true God; but rather gives their goods to

the spoyler and their bodies to the prison; yet this is onely for the exercise of a good and pure conscience, and not out of wilfull wrong and iniury; and their suffering is not as they are evill doers, but as they are Saints for a good conscience sake, because they cannot be subiect to the wills of uniuert men in upholding and maintaining such things against their consciences; but are willing rather to suffer then to offend the Lord, and their own consciences, neither is there good reason or equity in it; nor any part of a good conscience; that people by iniustice should be compelled to maintain a minister whom they know is not the minister of Christ by his fruits and effects and workes and practises, and so are forced against their own conscience to uphold a man in pride, in idleness, in covetousness and in a vain and evill life, by unrighteous wages, now if their mony were to maintain a man thats poor, or if that man had not of his own sufficiently to preserve his wife and Children from want, then it were a work of charity to give something if it were every year or oftner, to maintain him and his family, and the people of God would not refuse to give something for this end, no man should compell them nor have cause to spoyle their goods for it, but as he professes himself a minister of Christ, and a labourer in the gospel, but is not so, but lives in pride and the vanities of this world, upon such an account they cannot maintain him nor give him any thing at all with a safe conscience, neither is there any reason in it that they should for they receive not his ministry, neither doth hear him, neither doth own him as a minister of Christ, nor doth not partake of his labours, nor doth not set him on labouring, and this is greatly uniuert that any man should pay or be compelled to pay (by force and oppression,) wages to a man as his labourer and as his servant who doth not at all labour for him, or do him any service, neither doth the man partake of his workes or labours, neither hath any benefit thereby, but rather los and disadvantage because of his labours, which he doth for others, and not for him, nor by any

any order from him; for he knowes his labours to be nothing but vanity, and a cheat and deceiving of people, and for him to be compelled to maintain such a man, in such ill employment against his conscience, this is uniuſt and unreasonable; and what man in the world would do it or be compelled thereunto, without crying out of great oppreſſion; as to maintain a man with great wages, as his labourer and ſervant who doth not labour for him, nor ſerve him, but labours againſt him as much as is poſſible; and this is the very cauſe, between the Preiſts of *England* in their maintenance in claiming of it, and receiving of it, and the people of the Lord who doth deny to maintain them; or confeſs any lawful due they have to challenge any of them. And alſo it is a very ſhame to the people of this Nation for whom ſuch miniſters do labour, who cannot maintain their own miniſters themſelves, who labours for them, and of whoſe labours they do partake, but others are compelled by iniuſtice, to maintain them, who doth not partake of any of their labours, nor ſet them to labour, but denies them and their labour on that account, and yet are forced to pay them wages; and this is uniuſt and unreasonable, that men ſhould be conſtrained by force to pay other mens ſervants, which works and labours for other and not for them; and what man in the world having reaſon in him, would do it or be forced to do it, without complaining of heavy iniuſtice as to maintain another mans ſervant with wages, who works for others, and not for him, neither was hired by him, nor ſet on work nor receives any benefite by him, but another hires him and partakes of his labours, and yet he is compelled againſt all reaſon, and equity to give him his wages; all will conclude this were uniuſt and not according to God but againſt him; and this is the very cauſe between the people of God, who cannot pay to maintain falſe teachers and the people of the Nation, who hires ſuch teachers and receives of their labours and teaching and yet compells others to give them wages, contrary to good reaſon and Juſtice, and

against the exercise of a pure conscience, And above all the magistrates blindness and Ignorance, and the unjustice and wickedness of some of them doth appear, to their shame, by whose authority these things are done, reaching out their power in those things, further than they have received power from God, and abusing the law and just government, and subverting it to another end than wherefore God hath ordained it; for the magistrates power and authority, is not to be laid on mens consciences to oppress and Imbondage the tender consciences of the Lords people; in forcing things to be done contrary to good reason and against a good conscience; and by these things is the land filled with violence and oppression, and the Innocent and just doth deeply groan; till the Lord arise to plead their cause, and to bring deliverance unto them, through the destruction of all their enemies; and he will break down all the bonds of cruelty and oppression, and will take away every yoke that doth burden and oppress the upright, that his people may be a free people, from all unjust men, and the people of the Lord doth claime this as their priviledge, belonging to them by the just Laws of God and men, to worship God in spirit and in truth, and to uphold and maintaine that worship onely, without being compelled by force to maintaine any other whatsoever, and they claime as right unto them to maintaine what Ministers, and uphold what ministry, as they know is sent of God, by which people are profited, and which they have received the knowledge of God through by his spirit, and to be free to maintaine how and as the Lord leads them unto, without being forced by any Law, or unequall authority, to maintaine the false Prophets and hirelings, and deceivers, who lives in pride and excess, through the oppression of the poor and innocent, and such (as Ministers of the Gospel of Christ,) the people of the Lord cannot maintaine, but rather gives themselves to suffer heavy and cruel things by unjust and wicked men, who violates the just Laws of God and man; and the suffering

suffering is for a good conscience sake, & for righteousness sake, and not for any wrong or evill doing, and for a testimony that they are of God, and for a witness against their enemies, that they are of the Devill; who doth his works, and these makes war against the Saints and the Lamb, and the Beast seeks to kill all that will not worship him, for he hath been great in the earth, and his seat upon Nations, and who hath been able to make war against him, for many generations: againe there is another suffering great and grievous which is unjustly laid upon the people of God, which suffering is not for evill doing, but for a good conscience sake as is manifest; as because many are moved of the Lord by his spirit, to goe into the Steeple-houses and meeting places, or other places to reprove sin, and among people, or to exhort them unto good, and to follow Christ, and to deny the wickedness of this world, or such like, as they are moved, some are moved to reprove a hireling teacher, who deceives the people, and walks in the steps of the false Prophets, and lives in pride and vanity and evill, contrary to the doctrine and practise of Christ and the Apostles, and this practise of the servants of the Lord in reprovng evill and exhorting to good, is called a disturbance of the peace, and an unlawful practise, and such like; it is falsely judged by unjust men, who know not the spirit of the Lord, nor the moving thereof, and because of this, many innocent men are caused deeply to suffer, contrary to a good conscience, and some are sent to the house of Correction, there suffering cruell things from hard-hearted men, and some are put in the Stocks and whipped, and others fined and cast into prison, and such like sufferings are unjustly imposed upon them, and not for evill doing, as I have said, for though they reprove sin in teachers or in people, or exhort them to good, whether in Steeple-houses, Markets or other places, yet they do not hereby wrong any mans person or estate; neither is this any matter of willfull wrong, or to such an intent, neither doth it disturbe the

the peace, nor is any unlawfull practise; but onely out of a good conscience to God and man, is it done; and it is a matter of conscience to the servants of the Lord, to do so, and they cannot leave it undone least they should transgress the law of God in their own consciences; because they are commanded of God so to do, that people may be Instructed in the right way to God, and be converted out of every false way; and this is the very end, of their work and their intent in doing it; and they ought not in justice to suffer for it, for it is according to the law of God, and in reason and a good conscience, and the Lord justifies them in it, then that law and Iudgment must needs be corrupt and unjust, which condemnes the people and servants of the Lord, as for evill doers, for obeying the commands of God and for the exercise of their pure consciences, and no mans person or estate being wronged or Injured but onely sin and wickedness reprovved and exhorted from; And hereby thus is the law perverted, and true Iudgment turned backward, and the guiltless is condemned guilty, and the guilty is set free; and the obeying the commands of God and the exercise of a good conscience is unjustly iudged a transgression; and this is a shame, and will be great condemnation to such, in the day of the Lord by whose Authority this is done; even that the exercise of a good conscience, even reprovving of sin and exhorting unto that which is good, to follow that and to forsake all evill; should be iudged and punished as a hanius transgression in a nation and Common-wealth professing Christianity and pure Religion; and this makes the sin much more great and unpardonable, because the practise and faithfull exercise in Christianity, and in the pure and true Religion, is adiudged transgression & condemned by such who professes the same thing in words, and yet persecutes and punisheth the exercise of it in others; and this shews them uniuist iudges and hypocrits; who causes the Servants of the Lord to suffer; for the practise of that which themselves profess in words, to wit Religion and Christianity;

nity, for I affirme against all opposers whatsoever, that it is, a practise in Religion according to the Scriptures, to goe into the Steeple-houses, meeting places, Markets, Highways, or other places, and reprove sin and wickedness, and cry against evill in Priests and people, and exhort to good and to forsake evill, and therefore it ought not to be prosecuted and punished, but defended and maintained, by the just Government of a Common-wealth, and by just Laws and Magistrates; for this the Lord requireth that justice and truth, and true iudgement be exalted, and the innocent and upright defended, in all their ways of a good conscience, and that evill doers and sinners and transgressors, be condemned and rightously iudged.

Also many of the servants of the Lord doe deeply suffer, and is deeply afflicted by iniustice, for the exercise of a good conscience in other things, as because they cannot put off their Hats and bow in respect to mens persons, according to the vaine customs of the Heathen, and because they cannot swear upon a Book, by kissing it and laying the hand upon it according to the idolatrous forme, and for such like causes, because many cannot fulfill the lusts and wills of men, that lives in pride and evill wayes, in these and other things, therefore are the people of God put to great sufferings, though they deny not the honour due to all men in the Lord, without bowing the Hat, nor to affirme the truth in every cause, in faithfulness without an oath; now to keep on the Hat, which is a cover for the head, to keep from cold or heat for healths sake, before any man whatsoever, though never so great or noble, is not any wrong or injury to the mans person or estate before whom it is done, but onely the high minde and the proud nature, and that which is exalted above the fear of God, which would be Lord over his fellow creatures; that same is offended and troubled, which bears not the image of God, but of the Devil, as *Hannan* was, and would be bowed to, and had in honour, and respected,

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because

because of knowledge or parts, and proud gestures or apparell, and the Children of the Lord cannot doe it, nor give honour to him, nor be subiect, and pleasing to that man, who is of that spirit and of that nature which is not of God, but exalted in pride, and vain-glory above the fear of God and against him, and would be worshipped, and had in honour and revered of his fellow-creatures, who hath not so much riches in this world as he, nor is so proud in apparell as he, and because of that he looks if he be not, and then in his pride he rages and is vexed, and seeks revenge against such as cannot honour him, and respect him in his pride and vaine-glory; but as I said this is not done as a matter of wrong unto any, though the Hat be not bowed or put off, but it is a matter of conscience unto the people of God, and for a good conscience sake they doe deny, and may not give obedience, and honour, and respect, out of the fear of God, to proud flesh, and to men which is not in the fear of God, which expects reverence *out of the Lord*, and they know it is nothing else that is offended but proud flesh and an exalted mind, and a man that fears not God, neither walks in his ways; I say it is nothing else nor any besides, that is offended or troubled, because the hat is not put off and bowed, and the people of God are not carefull to please or offend, that in men, and men as such, for they know nothing of God, nor any man that truly fears God will be offended at the want of a hat bowed to him, and thus it is a matter of conscience unto many, and for a good conscience sake they doe deny to honour and subject themselves by obedience to any man, as he is a man out of the fear of God, and in the glory of the vaine world; expecting reverence out of the fear of God, and contrary to his Law, which forbids the respect to persons, and all honour which is not according to God; for who doth fear to offend a man, as a man without the fear of God, and
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doth obey & honour any man, by putting off the Hat before him or otherwife, *and not onely in the Lord;* such are servants to the wicked one, and not unto God; who fears the wrath of the wicked, and subjects in honour to please the wicked by putting off and bowing the Hat and such like; and such knows not the exercise of a pure conscience to God; so this is a matter of conscience to deny to honor, and to please wicked men, as such, by bowing the Hat, and no man in justice ought to be made to suffer because of it, for the Law of God justifies it, and that Law and iudgement is corrupt, and perverted which condemns it,

And likewise though many deny to swear at all; though not to testifie the truth, yet they do not wilfully wrong hereby to any mans person or estate, but it is a matter of conscience unto them, and with a good conscience they cannot swear, but doth deny it upon all conditions, because Christ hath commanded not to swear at all, and the Apostle doth exhort above all things not to swear; and therefore it is a matter of conscience unto many and not a matter of purposed wrong towards any man, and though here it may be objected; But for want of oath a iust man may loose his iust cause, because iudgement depends upon witness by oath; to that I answer, that is because, the Law is not according to Christ, by which the iudgement comes, but is uniuersally grounded upon the breach of Christs command, viz. swearing, and whether ought the man to be blamed or condemned as a transgressor, who keeps Christs command and cannot swear at all upon any terms, or whether that Law ought not to be corrected and regulated to be according to the Law of Christ, and all that which is contrary in the execution thereof to be condemned and removed; that a iust mans witness may be given and taken upon occasion without an oath; and his iust cause may goe on against his enemies by iust iudgement, grounded upon the naked truth in plainets testified without swearing, this is to be considered, and though it be again objected, but many, say some makes more con-

science and are more afraid to testify falsely upon oath; then upon bare words without an oath, so to have the truth known wholly, that is the end of the oath; to this I answer, a man that truly and uprightly fears God, will be as much afraid & make as much conscience of speaking falsely, as of swearing falsely, and out of a good conscience will testify as truly, as if he swore, and for others who fear to swear falsely, and doth not so much fear to speak falsely without oath, this is because there is a greater punishment to such, and it is accounted a greater offence among men, to swear falsely then to speak falsely, and for the correcting of that the punishment and offence should be changed, and such as testify falsely without oath, may be accounted offenders and punished, as such who swear falsely, and this will bind the wicked in a sufficient fear, and cause them to be afraid, of testifying falsely, even as much as of swearing falsely, if the testimony in causes among men, of such evill persons who cannot make conscience of lying; nor speak the truth without swearing; it ought the rather to be had, and to be done, by binding by a Law and punishing, if he testifie a lie, then by causing him to continue in the breach of Christs command; but however still I say such who out of a good and tender conscience, doe deny to swear, ought not to be persecuted and punished as great offenders; for while this is done, the Law and good Government is perverted, and authority is greatly abused, to another end then wherefore it was ordained of God, & that Law and authority must needs be unjust which oppresseth or punisheth the exercise of a good conscience, as for evill doing, and this sheweth the blindness and ignorance of men in authority to whom the Law is committed who discerns not, neither makes a difference betwixt things done in the fear of God, and in the exercise of a good conscience towards him, and things done out of an evill minde to evill intents, purposely and wilfully to wrong and injury mens persons and estates; for all Magistrates ought to

to learne this and to distinguish, that their power and authority may iustifie the one, and condemn the other, that true iustice and sound iudgement, may spring forth in the earth, and in the Nations, that all the upright and well doers may reioyce, and live in rest and peace, and all the workers of iniquity, and such as doe evill may be afraid, and feare to offend iust men and iust Laws, and thus would the name of the Lord be great in the earth among men; and such a Government renowned for ever, and such Magistrates would be a praise to generations after them; and a blessed example to ages to come; But now some may say & object, how shall this be known, & who can tell and discern of such causes, and who it is that doth their works, out of the exercise of a good conscience, and who doth their deeds out of an evill minde & to an evill intent, and so is wrong dealing, & worthy of punishment, this is a doubtfull cause may some say, and difficult to be known and understood; But to this I answer and say, To all such as have the spirit of the Father, and are led thereby, and in their iudgement guided therewith; this is an easy thing to discern, and an easy matter to know and find out, and such as cannot discern and distinguish in such matters, hath not the spirit of God, nor the spirit of true and sound iudgement, neither is indeed ordained of God, nor fit to iudge the people, nor the honour of a ruler and iudge, belongs not to such a one who cannot find out a matter, nor know and iudge between the precious and the vile; how to iustifie the one and how to condemn the other; and indeed this is the reason, and cause of so much iniustice and oppression brought forth at this day; because the spirit of sound iudgement is wanting, and such as are set to iudge hath it not, to try and discern and give iudgement by it, and therefore, light is put for darkness, and darkness for light, and good is called evill and evill good, and true iustice and iudgement is perverted and turned backward, and the guiltless is condemned guilty. But I say, if the work

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be done by a man, out of a good conscience, and as a matter of conscience, then he doth it in the fear of God, and in the Cross to his own will, and in meekness and tenderness of heart, nor seeking himself in what he doth, but is willing to suffer for the truths sake, and for what he doth, and will not resist evil, or the false judgements of men; but patiently and quietly bears all things; for the Lords sake, and in all what he doth or suffers, he gives the glory to the Lord, who works his works in him, and gives him strength and patience willing to suffer for them; But againe I doe answer, by men that hath the spirit of sound iudgement to rule and guide them; this cause is easy to be discerned, and the difference may be known, betwixt a thing done out of a good conscience, and for a good conscience sake, and a thing done out of an evill mind and purpose and to an evill end, to the wrong and iniury of another, for the ground from whence the works doe proceed, are contrary, and the spirit by which the works are wrought, are contrary, and the purpose and end to which they are wrought are contrary, and the spirit of God and of sound judgement, may and doth put a difference betwixt the ground, acting, and end of all works, for it is the ground from whence all works doth spring, and the end unto which they are brought forth, that makes all mens works good or evill, to be iustified or to be condemned, and where the measure of the spirit and power of God, is the ground of, and leader, in a work, that work as I have said, is done in the fear of God, and in uprightness of heart and in love and tenderness, and meekness and patience, without seeking or exalting self, but the glory of the Lord is onely sought by that man in all such his works; But on the contrary, where an evill heart and minde, brings forth works to an evill end, and to the wrong of others such works, are maliciously and wilfully, and enviously, and peevishly done, in frowardness, and headiness, and not in the fear of God nor in uprightness of heart; but with a double minde and in secret,

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or without the Counsell of God, seeking himself in his works, and not the Lord, and such works are wicked, and wrought by wicked men who transgresseth both the Law of God and of men; and must receive according to their deeds; and the Law that is equal must pass upon them which the light of Christ in their own consciences, may answer to, when they are condemned for their ungodly works; against which light they act, and that is the reason and cause, wherefore their works are evill, and to be condemned by the Law; for who acteth according to the light of Christ, and is led thereby, fulfilleth the Law, or it is fulfilled in him; and his works are wrought in God, and are the testimony unto men that he is of a good conscience, and for a good conscience sake his works are done, and such men and works are not to be condemned but iustified; And this is for instruction to all them that bear rule, who are Magistrates and Governours, and Iudges of the people, that they may now be wise and learne wisdom, how to iudge righteously and iustly among the people, that they may fulfill the will of God, in what he hath called them unto, even that they may cherish and defend and strengthen such as doe well, and all whose pure consciences are purely exercised, may live in peace and rest under such a Government, and all evill doers may be bound, limited and iudged, and may stand in awe and be afraid; and thus iustice and true iudgement would be advanced, and equiry would run down as a mighty streame; and the Nation would be blessed, and yeeld content and satisfaction to her Inhabitants; and hereby might the Rulers and Iudges gain unto themselves a good report, and an honour and renown would the Lord Crown them withall in generations to come.

Wherefore all ye Rulers, and all ye that are set to iudge the people, be now awakened to iust iudgement, and to a sound discerning, and put on the spirit of true iudgement, even the spirit of the Lord that you may receive it, to be taught in all things, how to walk with God,
that

that you may answer his call, and the end of your authority, in judging justly all sorts of men, rendring to every man according to his deeds, even condemnation and judgement to evill doers, and a praise and defence, to all that doe well, and this is written in love to you all; shewing you how to put a difference betwixt the precious and the vile, and between the just and unjust, that you may be the more happy if this you observe, not leaving your names a reproach and a scorne to after-ages, which is the effect, which doth follow, all such as perverts Iustice, and turns true iudgement backward, with misery and destruction, upon themselves and posterity, for evermore.

*A true and faithfull Exposition of some part of the
Laws of England.*

ALl ye Magistrates, Iustices of the Peace, Mayors, and all other Ministers of the Law, and all ye to whomsoever the Law is committed, I doe warne you all to take heed to yourselves, that ye fulfill the will of the Lord in iudging righteously, and executing true iustice and iudgement, and let not envy, nor false suspicions, nor ieaiousies have any place in you, but with a single eye try all things, and with an upright heart iudge for God, and not for man; and beware of causing the innocent to suffer, whose consciences are exercised towards God, though they be contrary to the world in their ways, & iudgments, for if you cause such to suffer, you doe not execute true iudgement, but subverts the Law, and the Lord will require that suffering of his people at your hands. Now consider the Law was not made for a righteous man, but for transgressours, such whose consciences are not exercised towards God, and such your sword is to be laid upon, to be a terrour to them, and not to the innocent; for they should have praise that doe well; and you must take heed, least you abuse your power to another end, then wherefore God hath ordained it; for the Law was added because

cable of transgression to slay the transgressor, and that is the end of the Law; Now you must take heed of causing any to suffer upon bare suspicion or evill jealousies, when as no transgression is truly charged, nor iustly proved against them before you; and you are not to be both accusers, and Iudges of any one, in any cause.

You have a late act for the taking up, and punishing of idle, loose, and dissolute persons, such as are vagrants, and wandering Rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars; Now this Law is good, if it be duly and iustly executed upon such as are truly guilty herein; and it is right that sturdy Beggars, and Rogues, and idle and disorderly persons, should be taken up from wandering, and set on work in some good employment in the Creation, which may maintain themselves, and prevent them from worse things; But now you must take heed of iudging any to be such, who are not really so; for many of the servants of the Lord now, as it was in generations past, are moved to leave their own Country and dwellings, and relations, and goe abroad in the Nations to preach the Gospell of Christ; and to bear witness of his name in the world, to the turning of people from the ways of sin and death, to the way of righteousness and truth; and it may be such cannot give you an account or sufficient cause of their travelling abroad (so as to satisfie you) For that is lawfull in the sight of God, which you may not iudge to be so; for Gods ways are not mans ways; neither his thoughts; as mans thoughts; Therefore I say unto you; if you cause any such of the servants of the Lord to suffer by that Law; you abuse your power; and subverts the Law; for such are not vagabonds, nor idle dissolute persons, nor Rogues, nor sturdy beggars; No more than Christ was; who had no where to lay his head; and the Prophets and Apostles were, some of which had no certain dwelling place, but left their Countries and relations, and wandred up and down the world from town to town; and from one Country to another, even as the

servants of the Lord doth by the same spirit at this day, who can no more be truly judged for Vagabonds and Rogues, &c. than Christ and his Apostles could be, who were a perfect example to us in these things; For it is a lawfull occasion in the sight of God, whatever you judge of it, to travell up and down (not being burthensome, or chargeable to any) to bear witness for the name of the Lord, and against all sin and iniquity, that people may be reformed, and instructed in the right way; Therefore you must make a speciall distinction in your iudgements between such as are Rogues, and idle and dissolute persons, who are hurtfull to the Creation, and such as are innocent and harmeles, and not of evill behaviour, (though you may through preiudice otherwise iudge of them) this is to informe you herein, that your iudgements may be according to God, and not according to man, neither with respect of persons.

Also you have another late Act for the Observation of the Lords day, wherein is inserted that none shall wilfully, maliciously, or of purpose disturbe, or disquiet the publick preacher, or to make any publick disturbance in the Congregations; Now the Law is good, and it is right that all such be punished, who doth maliciously, wilfully, or of an evill purpose disturbe, or disquiet any man or people, to the danger of breach of publick peace, and let all such be punished according to their desert; But yet you must take heed in this cause, for many of the servants of the Lord are, and may be moved by the power of the Lord to come into a Congregation, or an assembly of people to declare against sin and iniquity, and the ways of wickedness in people, or to aske a question soberly of the teacher, or to instruct people to edification in the way of the Lord, or such like may they do, as they are moved, and yet not maliciously, nor wilfully, nor of wicked purpose; For it was the Apostles practise, and the practise of the Saints to goe in the Synagogues and meeting places, and to dispute with the Teachers on the Sabbath days, and sometimes they spoke

spoke to the people by way of exhortation, and the people bid them speak on; and yet these were not disturbers of the assembly, neither were they malicious men, or wilfull, neither did they these things to any evil purpose, and it was the practise of the Saints, that all may speak one by one in the Church, when they were assembled together; and this is the practise of the servants of the Lord now, and yet they cannot justly be condemned by your Law, though they come into your assembly, as they are moved of the Lord, to object or reprove, or exhort, for they doe it not in malice towards any, but in love towards all, and they can no more justly be condemned than the Apostles, and Saints in the Primitive times, who were unto us a just example in these practises, as you may read in the Scripture; and you may as justly condemn them, as us, who are guided by the same spirit in the same things; Therefore you have need to take heed of condemning the innocent by a Law, least you bring innocent blood upon you; and you must make a perfect difference between such as comes among you, *wilfully and maliciously, and on evill purpose to disturbe, and molest any man, or Congregation,* and such who comes in the name and fear of the Lord, who are moved of him contrary to their own wills, and in love to all people; And in these causes you have need of discerning and sound judgement, least you condemn the guiltless, and abuse your power, and subvert the Law, and so bring condemnation upon your selves; And as you will answer it before the Lord in his dreadful day; cause not any to suffer through your envy, and surmizings or false suspicion, through over-reaching the words of the Law to a wrong sense, and to a wrong end.

Also it is inserted in the same Act against many evill things, *as drinking in Taverns, Innes, Ale-houses, strong-water houses, or to tipple unnecessarily, or any other house, &c.* and also against travelling, and walking on that day *vainly and prophanely, &c.* Now the Law is good that evill

exercise be prevented, and prophaneſs in every reſpect on that day, and on every day, and that ſuch be puniſhed that are found in any evill exerciſe whatſoever; But yet you muſt take heed that none of the innocent ſuffer hereby; for many of the people of God may, and doth travell on that day to meet together to worſhip God, and to waite upon him, to find his preſence, and to receive of his reſreſhments to their ſouls, But this cannot be judged an evill practice, or prophane travelling, or breach of the Sabbath; For we read of a Sabbath days journey, *Acts* 1. & 12. where ſome of the ſervants of the Lord returned from *Ieruſalem* to *Mount Olivet*, which is a Sabbath days journey, ſo that ſuch, who now travels to waite upon the Lord on that day, though it be ſeverall miles to, and from the place of meeting, cannot juſtly be judged to be Sabbath-breakers, no more than the Apoſtles, who travelled a Sabbath days journey in obedience to the Lord to waite upon him; So that you muſt take heed, and make a noted diſtinction betwixt ſuch who travels on a profane, and an evill exerciſe, or about the affairs of this world, and ſuch who travels on a good exerciſe to waite upon the Lord and to ſerve him; For the Law it ſelf excepts ſuch from being taken up, or judged Sabbath-breakers; So take heed that you ſubvert not the Law, and abuſe your power through falſe judgement, through your own envy, and ſo you ſmite the guiltleſs, and brings deſtruction upon your ſelves; For herein we own the Law of God to walk by, and the Apoſtles for an example, though we may ſuffer unjuſtly by you.

Alſo there is a late Act for diſcovering and repreſſing of Popiſh Recuſants, by preſenting, to ſuch as are ſuſpected to be Popiſh, or Popiſhly affected, an oath, as is therein deſcribed; to renounce the Popes authority, and to deny all his Doctrines, and to teſtifie againſt the authority of the Church of Rome, and againſt any licence given thereby, to bear Arms or raiſe tumults, or by violence to hurt the chief Magiſtrate, or Government of theſe Nations, &c. And ſuch as denyen the taking

king of that oath are to be adindged Popish Recusants, and to be proceeded against accordingly; Now that Law is good that such, who are adherent to the Pope, and by his authority would raise Armies and tumults, and offer violence to the hurt of the chief Magistrate, or Government, or people of these Nations, &c. As it is signified in the said Oath, should be discovered and repressed; But yet you must take heed, and waite for sound iudgement in the prosecution of the same: For all are not to be condemned that cannot swear or take an Oath; For many of the servants of the Lord, who are followers of Christ, cannot swear for conscience sake, because Christ hath commanded not to swear at all, Though such doth deny the Pope and all his authority and doctrines, and whatsoever else is signified in that Oath, who cannot iustly be suspected to be any way adherent to the Pope in Doctrines or practises, except through wicked envy you seek occasion against them thereby, and you abuse your power and subverts the Law, If you iudge such to be Popish Recusants, because they will not swear, because they cannot for conscience sake, but walks in Christs doctrine, who commanded not to swear, and follows the Apostles example, who said *above all things my Brethren swear not at all*, and such cannot iustly be suspected or iudged for Popish Recusants; who are followers of Christ, and keeps his commands; Therefore you must be considerate, and search deep into those things that are thus weighty, least you cause the guiltless to suffer, and thereby vex the Lord against yourselves; and you must make a speciall difference betwixt such as will not swear because they are guilty, and such as cannot swear for conscience sake, though they are not guilty, but clear, and free in the sight of the Lord of such things, as may be falsly suspected, and charged against them by envious men, which may watch for evil, and give Informations against the people of God unto you; But let your eye be single in all these things,

things, that you may save your selves from wrath, and condemnation, which will be a reward of all such, who subverts good Laws to a wrong end, and seeks to cover themselves in their persecution of the innocent by making the Law a Cloak, But such coverings will not hide in the day of the Lord.

And my friends in the execution of these and other Laws, let the fear of God guide you, and true judgement and sound discerning, that you may try into the nature and ground of every thing, and may not judge onely by outward appearance, but judge righteous judgement; And this is a great transgression in the sight of the Lord at this day, even the false execution of good Laws, and the subversion of them to wrong ends and uses by some wicked men, who are in authority, to whom the Law is committed; and this we know by experience; Be the Law never so iust and good, yet if the executioners of the Law be uniuſt and unrighteous, True iustice and iudgement is turned backward, and for want thereof the harmles, and innocent daily suffers, which kindleth and increaseth the fierce anger of the Lord against these Nations.

And likewise all you that are in power and authority, you ought not to command any thing of any man, which the Law gives you no power to command, for doing so, you make your selves transgressours, as for instance, you have no power by any Law to command men to put off their Hats, when they come before you, neither by any Law can you iustly punish them, if they doe it not, neither can you iustly punish such by any law, who denies to swear because for conscience sake they cannot; But what hath been inflicted upon some in such cases hath been by will and malice, and not by any law, and the Lord doth account such thing against the wicked, who causeth such sufferings; and of these things I have given you warning, and it is in perfect love unto you all, as

to informe you truly, least you cause the innocent to suffer.

I am a real friend to the Common-wealth, and a lover of justice and true judgement, and fully affected towards just Government, and wisheth well to Magistrates.

Ninth Moneth, 1657.

H. B.

THE END